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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0133  
INFO SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000170

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS  
AF/S FOR BWALCH  
DS/IP/AF, DS/TIA/ITA  
DRL FOR SMORGAN, MMITTELHAUSER, AND TDANG  
DOL/ILAB FOR SHALEY

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [ZI](#)  
SUBJECT: ZANU-PF Peacefully Protests Sanctions In Front Of U.S.  
Embassy

REF: HARARE 74

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SUMMARY  
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¶1. (U) A ZANU-PF organized group protested peacefully in downtown Harare and in front of the U.S. Embassy on February 24. The protesters, who were allegedly bused in from outside Harare, shouted anti-sanctions slogans and appeared to have been paid at ZANU-PF headquarters after the march ended. Although the group reportedly intended to present petitions at the U.S. Embassy and at the headquarters of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), neither has received such a petition. The police escorted the well-organized protesters but did not inform the Embassy in advance. Police briefly detained and released one journalist. There are no other reports of arrests or injuries. END SUMMARY.

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March on the Embassy  
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¶2. (U) At around 10:30 local time, approximately 1,000 ZANU-PF supporters gathered in downtown Harare for a protest march against sanctions. According to the MDC, ZANU-PF brought the group to Harare from nearby rural areas in buses and trucks. The protesters wore t-shirts that said "sanctions are criminal" and carried professional-looking posters with slogans such as "We will defeat sanctions to realize your dreams," "Sanctions are catastrophic to us," and "Pirate radio stations are stealing our sovereignty." The group chanted anti-sanctions and pro-ZANU-PF slogans as it was escorted by police through town.

¶3. (U) At approximately 11:00 the group arrived on Herbert Chitepo Avenue, about a block east of the chancery. The crowd, following directions from its leaders, peacefully marched in front of the Embassy, pausing for about three minutes to boo, pump fists, and sing ZANU-PF songs. The group also shouted anti-American and anti-U.S. government slogans, directing some of their comments at our locally employed guard force. The comments included: "Don't you want land? What are you getting from the Americans?"; "We know where you live, we shall get you one by one"; "We want war with you Americans we are not afraid of you"; "Charles Ray must go, he is responsible for sanctions"; "You are responsible for our problems." After jeering for a few moments, the crowd peacefully moved down the street. While stopped in front of the chancery, a few in the group attempted to stand on barricades in front of the

entrance but stopped when told to do so by Zimbabwean police.

¶4. (SBU) After moving away from the Embassy, the group returned to ZANU-PF's headquarters, where it appeared protesters entered the building in turns, possibly to receive payment for participating. Although it was rumored throughout the day that the group was going to present petitions at the Embassy and at MDC headquarters downtown, no one submitted a petition at either location. Beginning at approximately 15:00, the group was loaded into buses in downtown Harare. It appeared that some of the protesters commandeered some public transport, but the crowds quickly dissipated when it began to rain heavily.

¶5. (SBU) Although the police succeeded in ensuring the march in front of the Embassy was peaceful, no one in the Embassy received advance notice of the protest. The Embassy only learned of it at 10:45 from a civil society contact who heard about it from an MDC official. The Embassy is still without regular protection by the Zimbabwean police (reftel).

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Journalist Detained, Released  
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HARARE 00000170 002 OF 002

¶6. (SBU) Before the march began, plainclothes police detained freelance journalist Andrisson Manyere for about 15 minutes. According to Manyere, the police objected to his taking photos without having first sought permission from the police or ZANU-PF. According to another journalist in the area, Manyere was photographing the ZANU-PF youths scrambling for free t-shirts in front of ZANU-PF's headquarters. Manyere was taken to the nearby ZANU-PF headquarters building, where ZANU-PF officials and officers of the Central Intelligence Organization recorded his details and forced him to delete all of the photos from his camera. (NOTE: Manyere has been a frequent target of the police. He was arrested on January 18 in Harare while filming a march by Women of Zimbabwe Arise. Manyere was abducted in December 2008 and held incommunicado for several weeks by security agents who tortured him. He remained in prison until April 2009 and still faces charges of participating in bombings of police stations. END NOTE.)

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COMMENT  
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¶7. (SBU) Today's protest came as a complete surprise, despite our slowly improving communication with ZANU-PF and the police. Our contacts in civil society, who usually hear of large events in advance, were also caught off guard. Although the rhetoric expressed by the protesters is nothing new, it is evidence that ZANU-PF is once again exploiting rural youth to do its bidding, using enticements of free food, t-shirts, and a trip to Harare. This was one of the largest protests in Harare in recent memory and the first to take place in front of the Embassy in at least three years. END COMMENT.  
Dhanani